

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Nevada County Transportation Commission

FROM: Daniel B. Landon, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Executive Director's Report for the November 16, 2005 Meeting

DATE: November 7, 2005

1. UPDATE OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION MITIGATION FEE PROGRAM

On October 14th, representatives from the Nevada County Contractors' Association (NCCA) and the Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC) Technical Advisory Committee, Chairman Ingram and Commissioner Brady, met to discuss the proposed update of the Regional Transportation Mitigation Fee (RTMF) program. During the meeting, we identified the following items for action and/or further discussion:

- A change in modeling assumptions or methodology that will reflect a “more accurate” growth rate for land use, particularly with respect to commercial and business land uses (attractions).
- Consider establishment of a “differential” that will shift some of the fee burden away from commercial types of land use and add it to residential land use.
- Revisit the methodology of setting the fee for outlying zones (Zones 2, 3A, 3B, 4, 5, 6A, 6B, and 7). This revision will need to take into account the development pattern of the past few years which indicates that most growth is occurring outside of Zone 8.
- Consider the need to accelerate construction of the Dorsey Drive Interchange and modify the RTMF to provide the necessary funding at the earliest possible time.

I am going to review our previous land use assumptions against 2000 Census data, Caltrans Socio-Economic Forecasts, and the building data presented by NCCA, in an effort to see if we can develop a defensible means for modifying our growth assumptions, and to look at creation of a “differential” between residential and commercial fees.

John Rumsey, Senior Engineer, Nevada County Department of Transportation, suggested that we have Grant Johnson of PRISM Engineering develop a scope of work for preparation of an origin and destination study (commonly known as “O&D” studies). This type of study would give us a current snapshot of traffic interaction between Zone 8 (Grass Valley-Nevada City area) and the outlying zones. The data collected in an O&D study would also be very valuable for updating the NCTC travel demand model. Mr. Johnson will have a scope of work prepared during the week of November 7th.

I am constructing some “what if” scenarios that look at changing the development fees for the Dorsey Drive Interchange in an effort to find a means of accelerating the receipt of the funds needed for construction. Further, during the week of October 31st, I made contact with Congressman Doolittle’s staff to explore potential federal funding opportunities.

The results of reviews, spreadsheet development, and explorations will be shared with the Technical Advisory Committee and NCCA representatives later in November.

2. GRASS VALLEY CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (GVCIP)

Following a meeting on September 15th between staff representatives from Grass Valley, Caltrans, and NCTC, Tom Wood, Caltrans District 3 Deputy District Director over Traffic Operations, stated that Caltrans holds the opinion that a one-lane roundabout at the Idaho-Maryland/Main Street/Nev-20 on/off ramps intersection should not adversely impact the freeway weave or ramp operations. Consequently, Caltrans would not be opposed to the City pursuing a smaller roundabout than previously designed. This could be a stand-alone project without any obligation to improve the freeway weave or ramps, as would be required with the signalization of the intersection. Mr. Wood clarified that just as the City would want to validate that the roundabout will provide an improved level of service over the existing condition before they proceed, Caltrans wants a traffic analysis completed to validate the assumption that the roundabout would produce an acceptable metered flow to and from the freeway.

Mr. Wood indicated that if the roundabout proved successful, or the intersection remains essentially as-is for the foreseeable future, improvements to the freeway weave/ramps would be Caltrans responsibility to initiate and fund. He cautioned City staff that unless a significant collision history developed warranting a safety project, improvements would likely not be made any time soon. He noted an operational improvement project would not compete well for funding without local matching funds. Some improvements to the weave and ramps may be required as part of the Dorsey Drive Interchange project, if the pending traffic studies associated with that project conclude that the interchange creates adverse impacts.

In accordance with these comments, NCTC is using the services of Grant Johnson to assist the City with the requested traffic analysis. Preliminary results indicate that a smaller roundabout can provide improved traffic flow without exacerbating the weave operation, and without significant right-of-way acquisition. Mr. Johnson is developing a micro-simulation model to confirm his preliminary results and expects to have the model completed before the end of November.

3. LOCAL FUNDING OPTIONS FOR REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

In addition to Commissioners Beason and Steele, the following individuals have agreed to participate on our project Steering Committee for the Transportation Needs and Financing Opinion Survey:

Ann Guerra, Transit Services Commission and FREED
Don McCormick, Truckee citizen and former Council member
Kim Zwick, Grass Valley/Nevada County Chamber of Commerce
Jim Meshwert, Nevada County Business Association

In an effort to get broad community representation, I requested that a member of the Federation of Neighborhood Associations participate on the Steering Committee, and I expect to receive the name of a representative within a few days.

I plan to send out copies of the draft Request for Proposal (RFP) to the committee this week and coordinate the date of our first meeting.

4. CALTRANS TRANSPORTATION PLANNING GRANTS FOR FY 2006/07

In October, NCTC staff submitted two applications for Caltrans Transportation Planning Grants for FY 2006/07. One application was submitted to conduct a comprehensive planning effort to update the countywide Bicycle Master Plan and develop a countywide non-motorized trails plan. The other planning project submitted for funding was for a study to conduct a transit transfer facility site selection process. Caltrans staff will begin review of the grant applications in December. Notification of the grants awarded is anticipated to occur in the spring or summer of 2006.